

DOPE LABS

Transcript of Lab 038: So Anxious

Titi: You know what happened to me this morning?

Zakiya: What?

Titi: I looked at my calendar, this is what I do at the beginning of each day, I wake up, look at my calendar make sure like I know when all of my Zoom meetings are. And I didn't see anything until 10:30 a.m. It was something I had with you? So I was like, 'OK , I get to see my friend'. So I'm just walking around the house in my PJs, and then I got an email from somebody saying, 'Here's the Zoom link. See you soon'. And I panicked. I was like, What is this for? What am I doing? What's going on? This has to be wrong. So I'm looking at every calendar I have. I look at the calendar I write down in, the calendar on my phone, the calendar on my computer. I'm just trying to figure out what is going on. And then I finally figured it out. I had forgotten that I had a meeting and I ...

Zakiya: Well, did you have time to prepare for it?

Titi: No, there was no time. There was no time at all. I only had time to run upstairs, throw a turtleneck on over my pajamas and get in front of the camera. And they were like, 'Good morning, Titi!'. and I was like, 'Good Morning! It's so great to see you'. I didn't even know what I was supposed to be doing. I was like, I'm just going to have to wing this. Do you know how stressful that is?

Zakiya: That's stressful for anybody, but I know it's stressful for my friend because you like to plan. The only good part of that story is that you were able to throw on a turtleneck, right?

Titi: Yes.

Zakiya: We love turtlenecks.

Titi: I have an emergency turtleneck that is right next to my bed. Just in case

Zakiya: you just aren't writing the Steve Jobs. Just throw on this turtle neck and go. Man, I know you were stressed out. That will be tough even for me. You know, I'm OK with being last minute, but

Titi: I don't know how you do it.

Zakiya: You don't know what's going on. You just click it into the zoom. You don't know what you're going to get.

Titi: I didnt know who was going to be there. I didn't know what they're about to ask me. I just knew that I had to be there and that I had two minutes to get there,.

Zakiya: And I would have had to say, 'I'm sorry. I thought this was spam'. Link only must be spam. I thought you were hacked. I saw your link, but I also saw an email from you about gift cards.

Titi: Welcome to Dope Labs, a weekly podcast that mixes hardcore science, pop culture and a healthy dose of friendship.

Zakiya: You know, we're basically at the holidays. And for a lot of people, that means a lot of anxiety.

Titi: Yes.

Zakiya: Whether you're cooking for a big group of folks or reconnecting with your family members after a very long time. The holidays just have a way of feeling so challenging, and they can really be filled with all kinds of anxieties from day to day.

Titi: I always think about you in the holiday season comes around because you are the hostess with the mostest, and I always know like it's rare that Zakiya is not going to be cooking something, even if it's something small, like, OK, we're not doing a whole turkey. I'm just going to do like a turkey breast for me and a couple of people. But it's always, to me, a lot of stuff. So I know I'm over here feeling anxious for you. For you is probably nothing.

Zakiya: It's always a lot of fun. .

Titi: So one man's anxiety is another man's...

Zakiya: Party.

Titi: So this week we're talking all about anxiety. And specifically, we really wanted to know more about whether or not we can actually take our everyday anxiety and spin it into something that can help us.

Zakiya: Let's get into the recitation. What do we know?

Titi: Well, I think that anxiety is something that a lot of people deal with, like some people don't like to use the term anxiety, but I think everybody at some point in their lives have felt anxious.

Zakiya: Yes. It also feels like it's being talked about way more than it used to be. I feel like I see it everywhere, people talking about it, social media sharing about anxiety and tips and tools and tricks. So I do like the openness around anxiety.

Titi: Yeah, there have been a lot of people who have said, I struggle with anxiety. These are the things that, you know, I don't like. Do people that you would, I guess, assume like the type of industry they're in, whether they're actors or influencers or YouTubers. And you're just really surprised that this is something that they deal with. But it also, you know, makes a lot of people feel seen because it's like, OK, it's not just me, it's also these other people that stereotypically, I guess people would think wouldn't deal with anxiety. I think another thing that we know is that anxiety is not binary, like you're anxious or you're not. There's a spectrum of anxiety that you can feel, and how it manifests is different from person to person.

Zakiya: And I think we also know that manifestation does have some biological underpinnings. I don't know what they are, but I do know that there is something that can happen to your body after a lot of anxiety over and over and over again.

Titi: That's a really good point. So what do we want to know?

Zakiya: Has anxiety always been around? Like, is it new?

Titi: You think the cavemen were anxious?

Zakiya: I mean, I don't know. But it seems like there was plenty to be uncertain about during those times.

Titi: Yeah, I just think about Fred Flintstone, and I'm like, Yeah, he was definitely had an anxiety problem. Another thing I want to know is what parts of our anxiety are healthy? Is there a such thing as healthy anxiety? Is there like a little bit of like anxiousness that might help us? Or is it just all bad?

Zakiya: Yeah, that's a really good point. And then if it is all bad, what can we do?

Titi: Yes, help!

Zakiya: Throw me a life jacket a rope something. How do I exit this program? That's what I want to know.

Titi: Ctrl, alt delete!

Zakiya: Let's jump into the dissection. Our guest for today's lab is Dr. Wendy Suzuki.

Dr. Suzuki: Hi, I'm Dr. Wendy Suzuki. I am a professor of neuroscience and psychology. I've been at New York University for 23 years. So I am an author, a teacher, and a neuroscientist.

Titi: Dr. Suzuki's new book is called Good Anxiety Harnessing the Power of the Most Misunderstood Emotion. It's not like a lot of other books out there that provide tips for managing anxiety. With this book, Dr. Suzuki goes back to the origins of anxiety, how it's evolved, and why it's such a big problem today

Zakiya: with that groundwork as the basis for our understanding. She introduces a new way to really think about our anxiety, and that way we'll kind of help us harness its power so that we can lead healthy, happy lives. Let me tell yall, we need this.

Titi: Yes. So I think we're all pretty familiar with anxiety, what it is and how it feels, especially after the last few years.

Dr. Suzuki: Anxiety is that fear or worry that typically comes with uncertain situations. And so with that definition, you can understand why these days in our uncertain times anxiety is really going through the roof.

Zakiya: And I think now's a good time to kind of pause and differentiate between a couple of different types of anxiety because, like you said earlier Titi, anxiety really is a spectrum. So today we're talking about anxiety on the lower end of that spectrum, which Dr. Suzuki calls everyday anxiety.

Titi: But that's very different from clinical anxiety, which is at the opposite end of the spectrum. Clinical anxiety is a medical disorder characterized by intense, excessive and persistent worry and fear. Clinical anxiety is debilitating. It gets in the way of your ability to live your life day to day, and it should be diagnosed and treated by medical professionals.

Zakiya: While everyday anxiety might not be all consuming is definitely annoying and exhausting, and it's way more common than you might think.

Dr. Suzuki: It feels like a weight around your neck. It feels like a weight on your chest. And even before the pandemic, the stat that blew me away is that 90% of Americans before the pandemic raise their hands and said, I experience anxiety. 90 %. So imagine what that number is today. So basically, all of us have anxiety is that is the bottom line.

Titi: 90 percent is a really high number, and that's before one of the most stressful things that any of us have been through in our lifetime.

Zakiya: Right.

Titi: So I can only imagine what the number is now.

Zakiya: 100 percent. You know, this makes me think back to lab 32 with Ann Helen Petersen where we talked about burnout and all these other things that can kind of trigger or layer multiple different types of anxieties and manifest in different ways.

Titi: Absolutely. And what this also says to me is that if you're feeling anxious, you are not alone. Look to the left, to the right. It's all of us

Zakiya: Turn to your neighbor and say, 'Neighbor...', do you have any kind of types of low grade or everyday anxiety? Like how does it show up for you?

Titi: Yeah, I think for me, I've always thought of myself as just the overall anxious person. Like, I try and not exposed people to my anxieties and just try and counterbalance it with like just extreme like positivity as often as I can. But that also makes me even more anxious because it doesn't address the real problem. Like, I think I'm always worrying about every little thing like, Oh my gosh, is this the right decision? Is this the right next step? Is this the right thing for me to do? And I think that usually it manifests as me getting, at some point, really, really exhausted and tired from just like my brain doing all of these calculations and trying to predict the future.

Zakiya: Yeah.

Titi: What about you?

Zakiya: I think, you know, over the past couple of years, I've either developed more anxiousness or anxiety or just become more aware of it. Right? I think now the things that kind of trigger anxiety for me are big uncertainties. I mean, you know me, I'm generally like, "Oh, we'll figure it out. This will happen..." you know

Titi: Not a care in the world, my friend is cool as a cucumber.

Zakiya: But big level stuff that can have major rippling effects. I like to kind of know I like to have those general large, what do you call those like place markers. I like to have those things set in stone, and when I'm not sure, it feels like the scientific mind gone haywire, right? It's just a lot of hypotheses.

Titi: No conclusions.

Zakiya: No conclusions.

Titi: I feel that. I feel that. So we all have everyday anxiety, and we've all got our own ways of dealing with it. Then why are we talking about it today?

Zakiya: Well, Dr. Suzuki Says that even if you and your anxiety have quote unquote an understanding with each other and it's something you've just learned to live with over time, it can still have very real and potentially serious effects on your overall health.

Dr. Suzuki: Because anxiety and the underlying stress response, if left unchecked, leads to high levels of chronic stress, high levels of chronic cortisol, that stress hormone.

Zakiya: Cortisol is like your body's built in alarm system, and it does all kinds of important stuff like regulating blood pressure. It can increase blood sugar, keep your inflammation in check, even can control the sleep wake cycle. So you can imagine if the cortisol levels in your blood are out of whack. It can do a lot of scary things in the body.

Titi: I have not heard of cortisol, but I've heard of cortisone. Are they related?

Zakiya: Closely related? Like, if you get a cortisone shot or hydrocortisone shot, it's converted in the body by an enzyme into cortisol.

Titi: OK,.

Zakiya: So it can also be used like when you say, treating inflammation, if you know somebody got a cortisone shot in their knee or something like that, yeah, there you have it.

Titi: That makes sense. That makes a lot of sense.

Zakiya: And so you can imagine that abnormal levels lead to all kinds of health issues, not just in the digestive system, the heart or the reproductive system. You can also affect the brain.

Dr. Suzuki: Finally, in the brain, it leads to first damage and then death of two key brain areas that I've studied for a long time in my career. The hippocampus, critical for memory and the prefrontal cortex are executive control function of the brain, helping you make good decisions. Imagine brain cells in those areas being damaged and particularly in the hippocampus dying because of high levels of long term stress and anxiety. That is why we want to talk about anxiety, find a different way to channel it so that you don't go down that route.

Titi: That's scary. But Dr. Suzuki's book isn't all doom and gloom. She argues that by really understanding our anxiety, it can actually be a really good thing.

Dr. Suzuki: Anxiety is one of our core emotions. It serves something really important. Once we find that thing and we understand that think that it serves, we can kind of try and focus the energy and the level of that emotion so that it could help us. We're still going to feel those uncomfortable emotions, but we're going to make it work for us in a brand new way.

Zakiya: That's exactly what I'm looking for. Help me figure out how to make anxiety work for me.

Titi: Yes, put these nerves to work.

Zakiya: Right. And so I think the starting place is for us to understand why we're having anxiety at all. What's the point?

Dr. Suzuki: Anxiety at its core is protective for us. It's actually essential for our survival, and the best way to understand this is to kind of travel back in your mind two point five million years ago. And imagine there's a woman 2.5 million years ago she just has a little baby and she's gathering berries at the edge of a lake and suddenly she hears a twig crack. And that could be danger. That could be a lion that could be a tiger. That could be something that that could kill her and her baby. And so that is when anxiety is immediately deployed and the stress response.

Titi: And the stress response is what many of us know as fight or flight mechanism. Through a series of really complex interactions in our brain and body, it enables us to respond almost instantly to a perceived threat of danger.

Dr. Suzuki: And what I illustrate in the book is that in fact, we use that same exact system in a similar way if there is a noise by the window. Then you have that stress response, that anxiety response. What is it a robber? And works in the same way. But the problem is that in this day and age, it's the equivalent of hearing those twigs crack five times a second.

Zakiya: So what that Dr. Suzuki is saying is that we're all in the forest picking berries and we're constantly surrounded by lions. Everything that's happening is making us think is it a lion? Is that a lion? Is that a lion? Over and over and over again?

Titi: What kind of life is this?

Zakiya: OK, I might be exaggerate a little bit, so maybe it's not as immediately threatening as a lion, but there are so many things that are stressing us out.

Titi: At the very beginning of the pandemic that's what it felt like. I felt like every single person was a lion with coronavirus, and they were just roaring in my face and I was going to get sick or pass it on to somebody else. Everything felt that anxious. Going to the grocery store, that was most. I would be in the grocery store, sweating through my clothes because I was so nervous about everything and then disinfecting all the groceries. Everything was a lion, including that bag of chips.

Zakiya: And so when you think about something like that collectively that we're all going through, but then people can have their own personal issues, so like the everyday stress of their job or relationships. And then there's the bigger global issues like climate change or political insurrection. That's a lot of twigs. Some of those branches,.

Titi: Some of that is a whole tree. It's a whole tree okay? It ain't no branch. It's a tree falling on your neck.

Zakiya: Yeah. And then even if you're in your home, insulated it from all those things, it's coming right through your cell phone is coming right up on your TV alerts at the bottom. You know, information about what's happening in the world is constantly going right to your eyeballs, no matter where you look.

Titi: I have never thought about that. How the information age has introduced levels of stress into our lives that weren't there previously.

Zakiya: Yeah.

Titi: That's such a good point, Z. But I don't want to live in this perpetual anxious state. That's not actually helping protect against any of the threats. And as Dr. Suzuki explained earlier, it can actually be really unhealthy in the long term. It's not making us feel protected at all. The system, it feels like it's kind of broken.

Dr. Suzuki: And my answer is it's not broken. The volume is just turned way too high, and we've lost that protective aspect of this emotion.

Zakiya: First things first, I never thought of anxiety as an emotion before.

Titi: I don't think I really have either. I've just looked at it as a deficiency.

Zakiya: Yeah, I mean, it makes total sense, and it actually helps put it in perspective because emotions pass, anxiety is not forever. And if we think of it like she say it as something that's turned up too high, maybe we can be aware of these things, but we just need to turn the volume down a little bit more.

Dr. Suzuki: The first step of that is turning the volume down so that we don't have so many twigs cracking all the time and just launching us into this stress and anxiety cycle. The best first way is my favorite way because it is deep breathing. You might say, Oh, I've heard that before, but did you know that deep breathing is actually activating a natural stress reduction center of our nervous system?

Titi: OK, so we got a pause right there. I did not know that we had a stress reduction center in our nervous system.

Zakiya: Nobody taught me that.

Titi: I thought I had to purchase that on Amazon. Sage. What is it lavender? They put lavender at everything to tell you to relax. I didn't know I had built in lavender.

Dr. Suzuki: How come everybody knows about fight or flight? And nobody knows about rest and digest,

Zakiya: rest and digest? We need that on a T-shirt, Titi.

Titi: Preach. Yes.

Zakiya: The neuroscientists among us also know this as the parasympathetic nervous system

Titi: That sounds very fancy

Zakiya: I like, rest and digest better.

Dr. Suzuki: And so the best way we have conscious control of kind of getting that process going is deep breathing. I can't consciously decrease my heart rate, but I can slow my breathing down.

Zakiya: And another way to turn down the volume on anxiety is through exercise, even just 10 minutes of walking. Oh, I know, I know you don't like it. I know you don't like it.

Titi: Can we skip this part?

Zakiya: But Titi I'm telling you Dr. Suzuki talks about doing this experiment and having people just walk at the end and people reported, you know, feeling less stress. Now, whether it's just in the mind or not, I want to feel less stress. So I will be taking a 10 minute walk because I need that positive effect.

Titi: My friend, be biking 30 miles. A ten minute walk ain't nothing. But for me, that is a hike.

Zakiya: Listen, I need it.

Dr. Suzuki: Every single time you move your body, you are stimulating a whole wide range of neurochemicals to be released in your brain. I like to give the image of a neurochemical bubble bath that you're giving yourself every time you move your body. And what is in this bubble bath? Things that you have heard of dopamine, serotonin, noradrenaline and growth factors. It is clear that long term exercise can help protect the brain from aging and neurodegenerative disease states.

Titi: Once we turn the volume down on our anxiety, we can then take the next important step, which is to interpret it, focus in on those uncomfortable feelings of anxiety, and ask ourselves what's making me so anxious? And why am I feeling so anxious? This introspection can tell you a lot about yourself and what's important to you.

Zakiya: I know for me, my dad used to always say, 'If you're not nervous, it just means you're not taking it serious enough.' I don't know if I still agree with this...

Titi: It means you care.

Zakiya: School of Thought. But I think wanting to do well, wanting to show up those are the things that can make me anxious because I don't want to not do those.

Titi: Yeah, yeah. I think that there are lots of groups of people that feel like they have to do that all the time, and that can be exhausting. Show up and be perfect.

Zakiya: I had to give up perfect a long time ago, girl. I mean, just show up a little bit. But I think once we start asking ourselves those questions Titi, it really is kind of harnessing that

power. And I want to get to the part where Dr. Suzuki can help me make it work for me in a positive way.

Dr. Suzuki: Actually, one of the things that I learned that was most surprising that I learned from writing the book is I found myself making friends with my own anxiety. Why? Because I started to appreciate how valuable these uncomfortable emotions were. They're there to say, Hey, this is important. It's a threat detection system. This is important that you do well here. It means a lot to you.

Titi: So it sounds like your dad wasn't wrong. OK.

Zakiya: Oh, I know. I hope he doesn't.

Titi: Uncle Curtis, you weren't wrong. I'm here to say it. I'll send you a text message later. Being stressed out could mean you care about something because you really want to do well.

Zakiya: Yeah.

Titi: And this is really helpful. I feel like quieting the noise with a deep breath and then asking important questions making observations about our anxiety are already so helpful.

Zakiya: Yeah, I think is so important to first acknowledge and then slow the pace down a little bit and say it's not a lion, it's not a lion. That's way better already than just I'm going to power through this or I'm going to shove these feelings down.

Titi: Mm hmm. Dr. Suzuki says we can even take it one step further. Once we understand and observe our anxiety, we can actually see it for the gift that it is, and we'll talk about that right after the break.

Titi: We're back and we want to tell you all about next week's lab. One thing I'm really stressed out about is thinking about Christmas shopping.

Zakiya: Oh, that makes me excited for next week's lab, though.

Titi: Yes, because we are talking all about the shipping issues that have been going on since the pandemic started and this whole trucker shortage that Zakiya knew about but I had no clue what's going on.

Zakiya: And we're talking about a just in time for Black Friday.

Titi: OK, so let's get back into the dissection. We're talking to Dr. Wendy Suzuki about her new book, Good Anxiety.

Zakiya: And before we dig any deeper, we just want to level, set and remind everybody that we're talking about day to day anxiety. If you're experiencing severe anxiety that interferes with your ability to do day to day activities. We really encourage you to seek help from a medical

professional. And we've also included some resources on our show notes at Dope Labs podcast dot com.

Titi: We've already talked about how to turn down the volume on our anxiety and observe it. And just doing that can be helpful. But Dr. Suzuki says that once we're able to quiet the noise and listen to our anxiety, we can actually use it to our advantage.

Zakiya: So let's take an example what's one of the most common things that you do as a result of your anxiety, and how can you make it work for you? Dr. Suzuki mentions the What If list.

Dr. Suzuki: My What If list hits right before I'm going to go to sleep. And you know, sleep is coming, it's going to feel so good. And then suddenly, what if I didn't send that email? Or what if I did send the email and you know, my wording was wrong?

Titi: I think we've all been there. I will wake up in the middle of the night and be like, 'Oh man, what if I didn't turn off the stove' or 'did I locked the front door?' Or, 'Oh my goodness, I forgot to update that document for my boss'. And so now I'm scrambling,

Zakiya: Honey, at least you are waking up when I tell you I cannot go to sleep if I am anxious about things or if I'm 'what if this and this, what does that mean? Why do they say that? I should have said this' it's just ongoing. And then I look at my Apple Watch and it's like 4:57 am.

Titi: No! Oh, no, friend, that sounds awful.

Zakiya: So how do we turn that into a gift? What's the magic spell?

Dr. Suzuki: The gift that comes? It's a gift of productivity, and that gift is switching your what if list into a to do list? I say, 'OK, that's OK. I'm going to note all those things down and I'm going to take action on them tomorrow.' And why does that help? It helps because anxiety and the threat response evolved for us to take action in terms of the fighting or running away. That is a physical action. And so you can relieve some of that pressure by taking a cognitive action, sending an email, which is kind of an action. You know, your fingers are moving. It's a cognitive action, but it is one that will help you turn your anxiety what if list into a productive to do list?

Zakiya: You know what? I really like this, and I hadn't thought about it, but I used this journaling app. And so if I'm up late and I'm feeling like that, I write all those feelings down and I can make little bullet point list in there about things I should do blah blah blah blah. And sometimes that helps. Is this the same thing.

Titi: That makes a lot of sense? It's kind of like redirecting your energy like instead of just letting those things roll around in your head. And so you're tossing and turning in the bed, you push that energy into that journal and be done with it.

Zakiya: And you don't have to worry about like, what if I forget.

Titi: Right. And it's great because you're not surrendering to your anxiety and giving up the sleep that you need to be able to be productive the next day

Zakiya: Yeah. So you kind of get to prioritize rest and you get to say, OK, anxiety and all the stuff its tied to, I'll deal with yall tomorrow

Titi: rest and digest.

Zakiya: But I think all this really lives in this like delicate balance, though. If you give too little attention to your anxiety, you're going to drop a bunch of balls or things that you need to get done and you're going to be anxious about that. If you give it too much attention, you're going to spiral into, you know, anxiety tornado. Mm hmm. So I'm really curious about the sweet spot and I hope is broad. I hope it's big, you know.

Titi: Right. If it's as thin as the hair...

Zakiya: We're not going to hit it.

Titi: We're in trouble.

Zakiya: Yes.

Dr. Suzuki: Activation energy comes from focus, it comes from attention, it comes from that nervous energy that is really equivalent to anxiety. As that goes up, your performance goes up as your focus, productivity and in fact, anxiety goes up, your performance goes up to a peak.

Zakiya: You know, this makes me think about.

Titi: What?

Zakiya: Procrastination. I work best under some pressure.

Titi: You say this all the time. I am the opposite. When the pressure is on, my nerves get so bad that I feel like I am going to mess this up. I mean, it usually turns out OK if I like accidentally procrastinate. But oh my gosh, I feel like a lot of people feel this way .where putting it off the last minute and all of those juices are flowing and your anxiety is hitting the right spot, all the good things come together.

Zakiya: Yeah, it's like putting fuel enhancer in the gas tank, you know, because I'm the exact opposite. I don't want to be stressed out about something that's not coming right away. Right, because I'm like, please move that out of my view. You're blocking the picture. But it also feels like I'm just idling. It's just burning gas for something that's not really a go. And because of the type of person I am, I can give it as much time as is available.

Titi: Yeah.

Zakiya: So I prefer if we keep that time short, I can just be efficient in that window.

Titi: I remember when I was packing for a trip and if it's a big trip where I'm going to be leaving the country, I like to start packing like three weeks prior to take off. I feel like I need that time to be able to say, 'OK, let me make sure I have these things. I make a list of all the things that I want to take'. My friend it never fails the night before one a.m. Like, what are you doing? Oh, packing for my international trip tomorrow or today in a few hours? And I'm like, Oh my god, what if you forget something she's like 'it'll be fine'.

Zakiya: They'll send me another one. And our last trip together, you didn't have toothpaste and I had it.

Titi: I forgot my toothpaste. You see how that works. And she had it and she gave me the whole tube. She said, Just take it.

Zakiya: I had two. I just feel like you know.. That's also what happens when you pack last minute. Just I don't know if I put that in there. Another one. I think we need to rebrand procrastination, because maybe it's a life hack, you know, maybe it's my best self.

Titi: I think depending on who you are, it can be.

Zakiya: But you also got to tell the truth they sometimes don't hit the mark. But we won't get into that.

Dr. Suzuki: But then it can go over. So too much activation, too much nervous energy, too much anxiety and decreasing performance if it goes too high.

Zakiya: Is that how you feel like it gets too high, too close to the end?

Titi: Yeah, but the the runway for a being too high is big for me. Like, if it's a week before, that's when I'm like, OK, I'm in trouble. Even though I'm not, it's totally fine. That's the place where I'm trying to get into and trying to use some of these things that Dr. Suzuki was talking about where it's like, OK, write down these things so that you feel like, OK, this, I'm going to tackle it. So it doesn't have to be so much nervous energy,.

Zakiya: Right?

Titi: But like as things get closer and closer, oh my gosh, I feel like I'm staring down a freight train.

Zakiya: Well, hopefully you can find that window of when you're just, like, really focus really productive and just on it because I know I miss mine sometimes.

Titi: Yeah. And I think it's about.

Zakiya: I go too close to the mark.

Titi: I think it's about also being patient with yourself so you can figure out what your sweet spot is like I don't think I'm going to be able to figure it out today, but maybe over the next few weeks or months, I can try some things out and see what feels good.

Zakiya: Yeah, that Suzuki says that with more practice, people can learn how to get in the zone more consistently and use the energy from their anxiety to propel them forward.

Dr. Suzuki: It is really valuable to appreciate that there is an optimum level of focus and anxiety so that focus can increase with anxiety but too high and you start decreasing your performance level. And part of the kind of the goal of the book is to make people aware that they've already experienced this. And can they get their, kind of, use their own awareness of this to, kind of, push their own focus and anxiety to that optimum level

Titi: so we can leverage our anxiety and unlock our inner superhero? And that sounds so much better than just, you know, stuffing it down.

Zakiya: Yes, my superhero power is Last Minute Larry. OK, if you need something done at the last minute you're like, I only have 15 minutes. Can you review these slides? Absolutely.

Titi: OK. My superhero is Planned Patty, OK? She has lists, she's got everything organized, and she's going to make sure that in advance you know what's expected. All right, so we really want to know what you identify as, are you a Planned Patty or a Last Minute Larry? Look in your Spotify app right now, there should be a poll that pops up and let us know who you identify with me, Planned Patty, or Zakiya Last Minute Larry.

Zakiya: All right, it's time for one thing. Titi, What's one thing you've been enjoying this week,.

Titi: OK The one thing I've been enjoying this week is that my dad, he actually gave me a bunch of old home videos from the late 80s, early 90s, and I was able to use this company called iMemories. And I sent all of the videos to them and they were able to digitize all those videos so that we can actually watch them because they're all old VHS. And I could tell some of them were starting to degrade. And my dad, I knew my dad really wanted those videos. So I used iMemories and we got all those videos back and it was amazing to watch with my family and see what we were like in the early 90s. It felt like it was yesterday and a million years ago. It was a lot of fun.

Zakiya: So you can just watch them on your phone.

Titi: You can watch them on your phone. You can download them and put them onto your computer. So I was able to download all of them and put them into the cloud so that all of my family can see it. I've been texting like my uncles and my cousins, different clips and stuff like that.

Zakiya: That's wild, because I didn't receive any.

Titi: Oh.

Zakiya: You said you share them with that? Wow. You said all your family though, right?

Titi: Oh yes. Let me you know what? Some of these things, you know my phone be acting up.

Zakiya: I hope that's what it is.

Titi: Yeah, that's what it .

Zakiya: OK, OK,.

Titi: What's your one thing?

Zakiya: My one thing has been on television this week. I have really jumped into BMF, which is a TV show about the Flannery brothers from Detroit. Now I know we just talked about anxiety. Let me tell you what they were doing, which is illegally hustling. That would cause a lot of anxiety, but it's really interesting to see the origins of BMF. I know of BMF from a really different perspective, which is from hip hop so Fabolous and Young Jeezy were represented and promoted by BMF when I was.

Titi: What does BMF stand for?

Zakiya: Black Mafia Family.

Titi: OK. If say that out loud. Does something happen to us?

Zakiya: No that only happens if you say Jay Prince outloud

Titi: Say three times in the in the mirror.

Zakiya: You have to say it three times for it to be, you know, an issue. But yeah, so that's what I've been watching and I just caught up I'm on episode six. It is so good.

Titi: I have to check that out.

Zakiya: Yes.

Zakiya: That's it for Lab 038. We want to know your thoughts. Do you have any secrets to making anxiety work for you? Please tell us. Call us at 202-567-7028 and leave a message. Or you can give us an idea for a we should do this semester. We want to hear from you. That's 202-567-7028. And don't forget semester four is going to be exclusive to Spotify for free starting December 16th. So if you already listen to us on Spotify keep doing what you're doing, and don't forget to follow Dope Labs and tap the bell icon so you never miss when an episode drops. Now, after December 16th, you won't be able to hear new episodes of Dope Labs anywhere else. So if

you don't listen to us on Spotify, be sure to follow us on over here, where you can listen to Dope Labs, plus all of your other favorite shows for free.

Titi: And don't forget, there's so much more to dig into on our website. There will be a cheat sheet for today's lab, additional links and resources in the show notes. Plus, you can sign up for our newsletter. So check it out at DopeLabspodcast.com! Special thanks to today's guest expert, Dr. Wendy Suzuki. Her book *Good Anxiety: Harnessing the Power of the Most Misunderstood Emotion* is out now from Atria Books.

Zakiya: You can find more about Dr. Suzuki at WendySuzuki.com

Titi: Dope Labs is a Spotify original production from Mega Ohm Media Group.

Zakiya: Our Producers are Jenny Radelet Mast and Lydia Smith of Wave Runner Studios

Titi: Editing and sound designed by Rob Smierciak.

Zakiya: Mixing by Hannis Brown.

Titi: Original music composed and produced by Taka Yasuzawa and Alex Sugiura

Zakiya: From Spotify our executive producer is Gina Delvac and creative producers are Barron Farmer and Candace Manriquez Wrenn

Titi: Special thanks to Shirley Ramos, Yasmeen Afifi, Kimu Elolia, Teal Kratky and Brian Marquis.

Zakiya: Executive producers from MegaOhm media group, are us

Titi: Titi Shodiya

Zakiya: and Zakiya Whatley.